

beautiful feast though a solemn one; there was no joyousness among the believers. They were sad because the Master was not with them. He had not come. He had excused himself for not coming.

Tablets were chanted and speeches were made, but evident gloom pervaded all hearts, so much so that I came to the conclusion that Abdu'l Baha could never have been absent from any feasts before when at Haifa at all.

Thus the feast went on, so we western believers not failing to receive much consideration and kind attention at the hands of our oriental brothers and sisters. Persian tea was served, also fruit, candy and cake. Twigs of bougainvillers looked festive upon the large table amidst artistically grouped oranges and tangerines.

When the feast was over and we came down from the mountain it was already somewhat dark, for it was November and the sun had set early. I was approaching the residence of Abdu'l Baha and found myself standing alone in front of the garden gate. I felt a great longing to enter, hoping to see Abdu'l Baha. Nevertheless I hesitated.

My thoughts turned to Lua. Would she have been afraid to go in? I thought of the words of Christ, "Perfect love casteth out fear." Was it the lack of perfect love that kept me from entering? In this consciousness I continued my way to the Pilgrim House.

It was not until long after that day that I came upon the words of Abdu'l Baha that had reference to that hour. "Love is the source of all divine bestowals, and unless love takes possession of the heart no other divine bounties can be revealed in it," were the words.

At eight o'clock that evening Mrs. Krug came to the Pilgrim House for supper and spoke to us of Abdu'l Baha. Her words made me believe that she had seen him after the feast. [2] But in reality Mrs. Krug had not seen him, but had heard his dear words when he was told that the believers were unhappy at the feast because he was not there. Mrs. Krug told us that he had replied that he was there in spirit, and that the friends should not attach importance to the absence of the body. "The friends must not attach importance to the absence of the body," he had said.

At a quarter past eight the evening meal was brought in. We immediately asked the bringer for news of Abdu'l Baha's condition and he told us that Abdu'l Baha had just retired to his room for the night. After supper we remained sitting at the table engaged in conversation until about ten o'clock when we, too, retired.

As I learned afterward, Abdu'l Baha had retired at about eight o'clock, having partaken only a small amount of food for his repast. In his room, he divested himself of one or two of his outer garments and then lay down on the divan. He seemed to rest there quietly until about ten o'clock when he called his daughter Rouha Khanum who was in the room with him. He said he wished to go to bed.

He sent word by her to the household that all should go to bed. Accordingly, they all did so.

We at the Pilgrim House did the same at about that hour. Abdu'l Baha, after having gone to bed, again slept apparently until nearly eleven o'clock. Then he roused and his daughter Rouha Khanum came to his bed. She saw that Abdu'l Baha had perspired much. She poured some water for him which he drank. She then went to his dresser to obtain a fresh night garment for him. But, alas, she found none! Her father, as usual, had given everything away.

At the time this was related to me I thought of a beautiful cotton night shirt that my husband and myself had brought along with us from a believer in Germany who sent it by us to Abdu'l Baha as a present. It was a fine gentleman's garment, all handmade by the sender, of the best pre-war cotton goods and embroidered with Abdu'l Baha's monogram. It seemed superfluous to ask what had become of it - no doubt it had gone by the way all such things would go when given to Abdu'l Baha, "the father of the poor."

Rouha Khanum then ran over to her own house and returned to her father's bedside with the needed garment secured from her husband's drawer. Afterward she gave Abdu'l Baha some water to drink and presently he fell asleep again.

We, too, slept at the Pilgrim House.

Then I suddenly awakened by a peculiar knock at the side door of the Pilgrim House. And what a knock it was! Such a knock I had never heard in the stillness of the night! It was a knock that spoke louder than cannons. It was a knock with no reserve to it. It was a knock of desperation. It was a knock that would fain rouse the whole world!

It seemed to me that though Fugeta was all too slow to light his candle to go to the door. For no electric lights were at that time at the houses there. When I finally heard him open the door, some words in Arabic were spoken and the messenger went away again. I went out into the hall to learn from Fugeta the happening, but he answered only by saying, "Go to bed, go to bed."

I returned to my room and said to my husband, "Do get up at once and dress." I went to Johanna's door to tell her the same. She was up, standing in the middle of her room in the dark. She said, "Yes, something terrible must have happened for I heard them over in the garden calling for Dr. Krug." I returned to my room, and rushed into my clothes when Fugeta came to the door, saying, "Come quickly to the Maser's house, the Master is very low!"

I was out on the street in no time. I had not even thought of waiting for my husband or for Johanna. On the street, I realized that I was trembling intensely and could hardly walk. But I reached the Master's house and entered the front door and followed a dim light. I soon stood at the door of Abdu'l Baha's bedroom and saw in the room Doctor Krug and Doctor Rifaat Bay, a visiting believers of Beirut, standing close by each other, and one of the holy ladies sitting on the edge of the divan, and Rouha Khanum kneeling on the floor at the side of the bed of her father. I entered the room and dropped on my

knees beside her. Abdu'l Baha was in bed, the mosquito netting drawn back at one side. His eyes were closed as though he was sleeping. He did not look pale or changed, only his head was in a strangely uncomfortable looking position. Several other believers entered. No one wept noticeably at that time, but the expression of consternation was upon all faces. Rouha Khanum on her knees - her face turned to that of her father - uttered in anguished tones - and as though in explication to her own self - the details of the dire happening, as though to make it real to herself - for she was not yet convinced that her father's life had flown. I could not believe it either and I asked her if our Lord was dead. To this she asked me in turn the same question. I replied, "No, I believe he is only unconscious," and begged her to prevail on the doctors to give Abdu'l Baha an hypodermic injection. Doctor Krug replied that this would have no effect, that the life was quite extinct - that the heart had ceased to beat. After a few minutes I asked Rouha Khanum if I could adjust Abdu'l Baha's head to a better position and she said I could. For this I got up from my knees, and while I was gently turning him at the head of the bed, Rouha Khanum requested some one to slip an extra pillow away from Abdu'l Baha's head that had been put there during a vain effort to retain his life. I felt the warmth and mixture of Abdu'l Baha's head while I held it in my hands, and I realized that mine had been a great privilege.

When I looked up again I saw many more people had come into the room, my husband and Johanna among them. They all wept, some kneeled, some exchanged whispered words. To all it seemed impossible to realize that our Lord was no more. Still others came in. When this continued, the feeling overwhelmed me that we believers - the holy family excepted - were standing in a place and in a room to which no known privilege had given us entrance. I felt that this time we had "rushed in where angels fear to tread" and the shock of Abdu'l-Baha's quick death had removed the ordinary barriers and restrictions. Had Abdul'-Baha passed away expectedly, as did the Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, it probably would have been different. All the believers must have felt the same - that we were standing on holy ground - that we were encompassed by the burning bush - and that we should retreat.

A sheet was laid over the bed, covering Abdu'l Baha's face and form, and veiling him from our sight. The mosquito netting was let down. With this veiling and shutting out of Abdu'l Baha from our sight the believers began to realize their bereavement, and all gave way to unrestrained lamentation.

After some time of bitter weeping, the believers one by one rose from their knees and began to leave the room, but not before they had, each one, kissed and touched with lips and forehead the place where our Lord's blessed feet were resting.

When most of the believers were gone out of the room, the Holy Mother closed the doors and locked them.

Notes

1. See "from a letter of Miss Johanna Hauff to her parents" in the Star of the

West, Vo. XII, and in "Sonne der Wahrheits" Vol. XI.

2. Certify letter to Mrs. Ella Goodall Cooper, in Star of the West, Vol. XIII

METADATA

Views3483 views since posted 2019-06-30; last edit 2025-02-27 20:56 UTC;

previous at archive.org.../bosch_night_abdul-baha_passing

Language

English

Permission

public domain

History

Typed 2008 by Don Calkins.

Share

Shortlink: bahai-library.com/5126

Citation: ris/5126

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations

Compilations-NSA

Compilations-personal

Documents

East-asia

Encyclopedia

Essays

Etc

Excerpts

Fiction

Glossaries

Guardian

Histories

Introductory

Letters

Maps

Music

Newspapers

NSA-documents

NSA-letters

[Personal](#)
[Pilgrims](#)
[Poetry](#)
[Presentations](#)
[Resources](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Scripts](#)
[Software](#)
[Statistics](#)
[Study](#)
[Talks](#)
[Theses](#)
[Transcripts](#)
[Translations](#)
[UHJ-documents](#)
[UHJ-letters](#)
[Video](#)
[Visual](#)
[Writings](#)

[home](#)

[sitemap](#)

[series](#)

[chronology](#)

[search:](#)
[author](#)

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)
[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Night of the Passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha (Used by permission of the curator)